

Area Plan Summary

University-Dale Transit-Oriented Development Study

Addendum to The Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

Recommended by the Planning Commission on January 9, 2004

Adopted by the City Council on February 25, 2004

*This summary appends to the Comprehensive Plan the vision and strategies of the **University and Dale Transit-Oriented Development Study**. The study outlines a community agenda based on nine guiding principles contained in the Recommendations section of this summary.*

Copies of the full-length plan are available for review at the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, and the offices of the Summit-University Planning Council and the Thomas-Dale Planning Council.

Location

The study area boundary is a quarter-mile radius from the University and Dale intersection. Its borders are roughly Grotto Street to the west, Thomas Avenue to the north, Mackubin to the east, and Interstate 94 to the south.

Study Area Location



Vision

The University-Dale area currently contains a mix of uses, including a concentration of office and retail along University Avenue, and residential uses in the area surrounding the intersection. The vision for the University-Dale area is to create a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment, encourage a mix of land uses, and enhance the area's image while respecting the diverse history and culture of the area.

The following criteria have been established as measures of success for development in the study area:

1. Parking lots are behind buildings or screened.
2. Development actually occurs, resulting in increased land values and investment in neighborhood.
3. Mixed-use development integrates a variety of uses.
4. A variety of housing types, sizes and styles promote diversity.
5. There are businesses in this project area that residents could shop at even if the prices were slightly higher.
6. Development occurs exactly as the community wants (as expressed through this plan), even if it means waiting several years.
7. Some development includes premium building materials even though this may result in higher-priced merchandise and services.
8. Development is the "right height" for the intersection of University and Dale (4-5 stories, as expressed by the community).

Assumptions

University Avenue has the best public transit service in the region. As traffic congestion gets worse in the Twin Cities region over the next 20 years, and as the region's population grows, more people will seek to live and work in areas close to employment and entertainment, and in areas served by public transportation. Transit-oriented development (TOD) is focused on two outcomes for land immediately along the transit corridor:

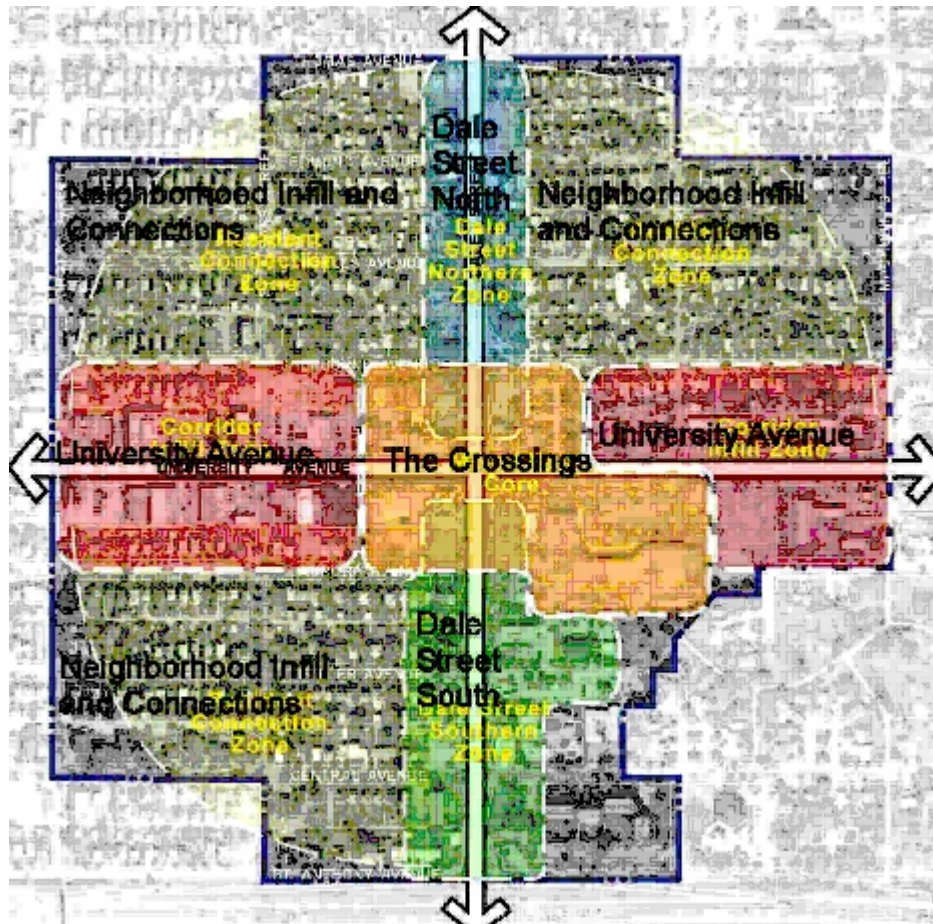
1. Creating a physical environment that is friendly to transit users, pedestrians, and automobiles.
2. Increasing the intensity of use around major transit stops thereby creating a diversity of commercial and residential space in a neighborhood.

In addition, the following assumptions were established as the premise of the study:

1. Any redevelopment in the study area must be economically viable.
2. Automobile and pedestrian traffic will increase in the area along both University Avenue and Dale Street over the next 20 years as is the larger scale trend that is happening throughout the city.
3. University Avenue is, and will be, a heavily-used transit corridor. This TOD study does not depend on light rail or bus rapid transit to validate the intent of the study.
4. Transit-Oriented Development is desirable at this location and is acknowledged by the City as a goal of this study.
5. Development is actively coming to this area and indeed has already been proposed at some of the opportunity sites defined in this study. Doing nothing, in regard to planning for the future, is not an option.
6. Long-term planning can coexist with, and inform, near-term redevelopment efforts.
7. The direct mitigation of social problems, with the exception of the crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), is not within the scope of this study.
8. The proposed Pan-Asian Urban Village development at the southeast corner of University and Dale is proceeding as planned. If the Pan-Asian Urban Village does not happen, any future development at the site should conform to the principles of this plan.

Sub-Area Design

The plan divides the area into five sub-areas: the Crossings, University Avenue Corridor, Dale Street North, Dale Street South, and Neighborhood Infill and Connections. For each sub-area, the plan presents an illustrative / land use plan, development examples, recommended building heights and articulation, development scenarios, and recommended streetscape improvements. There are also overall guiding principles that are applicable for the entire area. New developments are encouraged to conform to these recommendations.

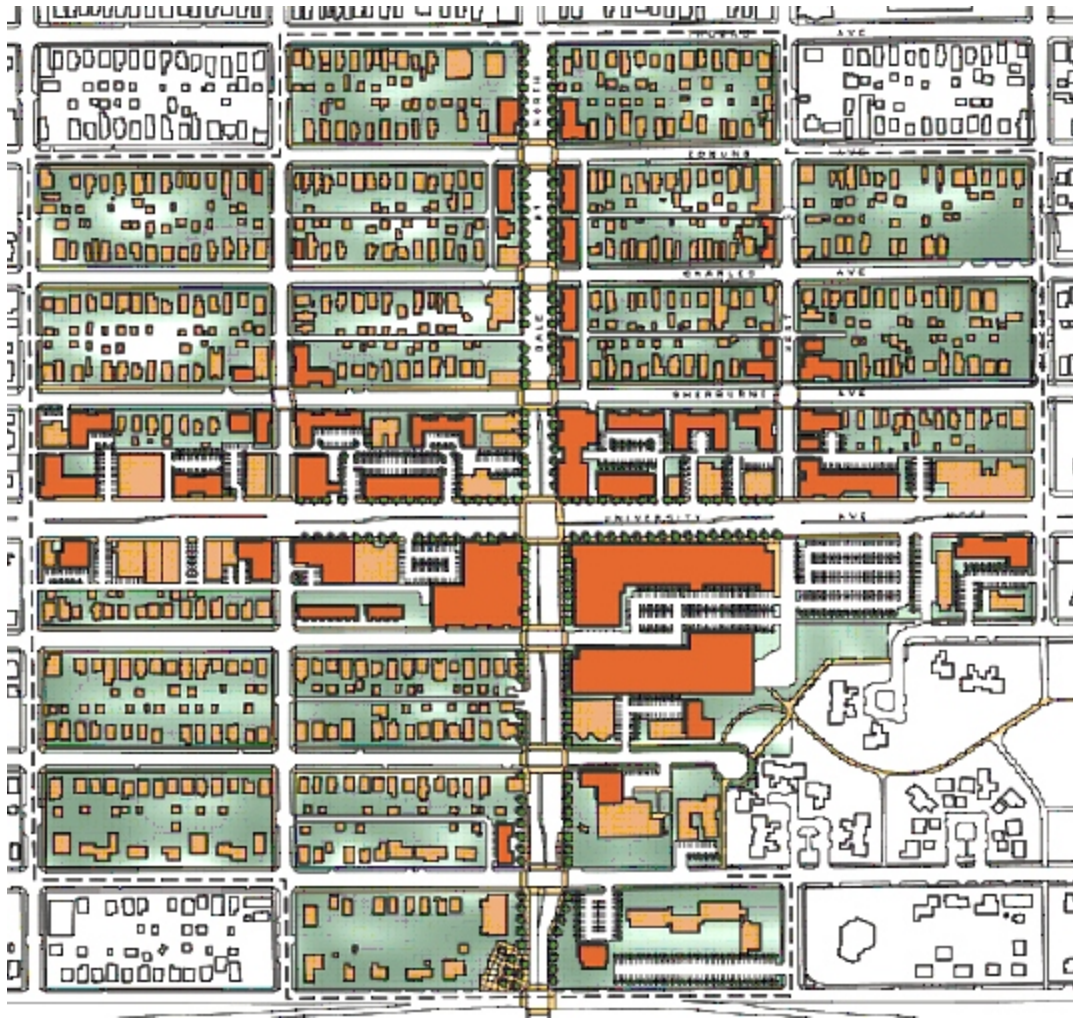


Guiding Principles

Any redevelopment project proposed for the area should be designed to be consistent with the guiding principles in the plan. The principles emphasize the following:

1. Create a safe and pleasant walking experience with a strong orientation to, and focus on, the pedestrian.
2. Enhance the area's image by creating an identifiable urban district unique to the University/Dale area, making this area a destination.
3. Respect the diverse history and culture of the area.
4. Encourage a variety and mix of land uses appropriate to the area.
5. Create a focus on the University/Dale node with architectural creativity and building height.
6. Promote diversity by providing a variety of housing types, sizes and styles.
7. Create more opportunities for green space, streetscape, and public art.

8. Encourage a visual, architectural and/or symbolic connection that unifies all four corners of the University/Dale intersection.
9. Ensure that the margins of redevelopment are compatible with the scale, design and use of adjacent neighborhoods.



20-Year Illustrative Plan

The Crossings: University and Dale Intersection

The Crossings district, bounded by Sherburne, Kent, Aurora and St. Albans, is designed to be a robust mixed-use development zone enhanced by the immediate proximity of frequent transit services. The intent is to develop larger-scale and denser buildings to form an identifiable core to the study area. Buildings should be 4 to 5 stories in height with setbacks from the public right-of-way limited to 2 feet or less.

University Avenue

The University Avenue district is defined as the project area both east and west of the “Crossings” district. It is intended to be a commercial and / or mixed-use development zone. A building height of 2 to 3 stories is recommended, while a building height of up to 4-5 stories is acceptable if economically feasible. Setbacks from the public right-of-way should be minimal to none at all.

Dale Street South

The area south of University along Dale Street is the gateway into the area from the south and from Interstate-94. The south end of this area is envisioned to become more like a boulevard and more welcoming through deeper building setbacks and large landscaped frontages. Further north along Dale near University, buildings should step up to the public right-of-way and create a more urban feel. Buildings should be 2 stories or tall single-story structures with parapet heights of over 20 feet. A public space towards the south end of the district is recommended to celebrate the wealth of cultural and historic heritages in the neighborhood. Public art is also strongly encouraged in the district.

Dale Street North

The plan calls for mixed-use commercial and residential development along Dale Street north of University Avenue. On the east side of Dale, the plan envisions a larger commercial or mixed-use building at the corner at University, and mixed-use or residential further north along Dale Street. These developments would be urban in character, yet provide for a small setback to be used for private gardens and greenspace. On the west side of Dale, the buildings would remain predominantly commercial.

Neighborhood Infill and Connection Zone

This zone refers to the residential area around the University and Dale intersection. The plan calls for more infill and development of smaller, lower-scale projects that are consistent with the existing neighborhood character. Between Sherburne and University and between University and Aurora, the land use should be intensified to allow 2- to 3-story apartments or mixed commercial / residential buildings. Between Sherburne and Charles and between Aurora and Fuller, townhomes and duplexes are appropriate for residential infill mid-block, and apartments are more suitable at street corners.

Priority Actions for City Participation

To promote development that is consistent with the recommendations of this plan, the City of Saint Paul should:

1. Rezone property in the study area to TN2 (Traditional Neighborhood) as recommended by the plan. (PED)
2. Actively engage developers to fulfill the goals and initiatives of the plan. (PED).
3. Implement streetscape improvements through its Capital Improvement Budget and STAR grants and loans. The streetscape plan should be developed by professional designers based on the concepts contained in the TOD plan. (Neighborhood organizations, Public Works)
4. Assist minority business owners to overcome typical barriers, including language, legal, code and enforcement issues. (Neighborhood organizations, PED)
5. Create a marketing brochure to promote the opportunities of the project area and distribute to interested developers, tenants, and property owners. (Midway Chamber, University United, PED)
6. Encourage development at the intersection to incorporate transit patron waiting areas at both the interior and exterior of buildings where appropriate. (Developers, Metro Transit, PED)
7. Encourage temporary public art installations and public safety initiatives. (PED, Parks and Rec, neighborhood organizations, Public Art Saint Paul, property owners and businesses)
8. Encourage shared parking throughout the commercial areas. (Developers, PED, LIEP)

Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds the *University-Dale Transit-Oriented Development Study* and the related *40-Acre Study* consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Process

The City of Saint Paul initiated the planning study with funding from the Metropolitan Council through the Livable Communities Demonstration Account. The planning process began in July 2003, when a task

force consisting of local residents, property owners, businesses, community-based organizations and developers was assembled to guide the development of the study. There were a total of three community workshops and three task force meetings from August to October 2003. The planning consulting firms of Hay Dobbs and Hoisington Koegler Group assisted the task force in completing a survey of the community; creating development concepts, a land use plan, an illustrative plan, and design guidelines; and completing the written document.

Copies of the University Dale Transit-Oriented Development Study can be obtained by calling Yang Zhang at 651-266-6659.